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SPECIAL POLITICAL AND
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(FOURTH COMMITTEE)
6th meeting
held on
Monday, 18 October 1993
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 6th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. CHIRILA (Vice-Chairman)	(Romania)
later:	Mr. KALPAGE (Chairman)	(Sri Lanka)

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* Items considered together.

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In the absence of Mr. Kalpage (Sri Lanka), Mr. Chirila (Romania), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 18: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (Territories not covered under other agenda items) (continued) (A/48/23 (Part IV, chap. IX, Part VI, chap. X, and Part VII, chap. IX), A/48/95*-S/25364*, A/48/426; A/AC.109/1137-1139, 1141-1153, 1155-1158, 1161, 1163-1164, 1170; S/25170, 25818, 26185)

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AGENDA ITEM 119: OFFERS BY MEMBER STATES OF STUDY AND TRAINING FACILITIES FOR INHABITANTS OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES (continued) (A/48/443)

1. Ms. DAPUL (Philippines) said that denying dependent peoples the opportunity to exercise self-determination was tantamount to denying them their basic human right. Particularly in the light of its own long and difficult experience, the Philippines was committed to eradicating colonialism by the end of the century. Colonialism was an anachronism in an era of democratization and internationalization.

2. The Philippines welcomed the innovative approaches of the Special Committee on decolonization in monitoring the political, economic and social conditions in the Non-Self-Governing Territories and in allowing representatives of the Territorial Governments to take a greater part in the Special Committee's work. Several Territorial leaders had clearly indicated that an acceleration of the economic and social development of their Territories would hasten self-determination and independence, and those views, rather than irrelevant issues, must be reflected in the resolutions on decolonization proposed by the Special Committee. Moreover, empirical data should be used to assess the pattern of foreign investments in the Territories, in order to set objective criteria for measuring the performance of their administering Powers, all of which must be

(Ms. Dapul, Philippines)

encouraged to cooperate with the Special Committee in accelerating decolonization.

3. Her Government was encouraged by the progress made towards resolving the issues in New Caledonia and Western Sahara.

4. The Fourth Committee itself must reflect both the dramatic changes currently taking place in the world, and the wishes of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories in the resolutions it adopted, and respect their right to choose their political and economic system, whether through integration with the administering Power or through independence.

5. Mrs. RAKOTONDRAMBOA (Madagascar) observed that since colonialism was at the root of most existing current regional conflicts, the exercise of the right of self-determination was essential to regional security and international stability. The Organization's praiseworthy success in having assisted more than 80 States in gaining sovereignty through self-determination was not matched by a comparable success in helping them to achieve economic autonomy, the corollary of independence. The goal of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism should be not so much to bring about the self-determination of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories as to assist their people by devising and implementing appropriate programmes and measures that would best prepare them to assume responsibility for the future conduct of affairs.

6. The role of the Special Committee on decolonization, which gave priority to the interests of the inhabitants of dependent Territories, was central to the slow, patient process of decolonization. The contribution of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system and the work of non-governmental organizations dedicated to the cause of decolonization should also not be overlooked. As those most concerned, the indigenous representatives of dependent Territories must be able to furnish information and suggestions for building the future of their countries, and must be allowed to make themselves heard as observers in international forums, as had been the case in the Pacific Regional Seminar held in June 1993 in Papua New Guinea.

7. Although Madagascar did not believe that all initiatives by administering Powers worked to the detriment of the inhabitants of the Territories under their control, it urged those Powers to compensate for the inevitably negative impact of the geographical situation of most of the Territories by adopting policies more favourable to the interests of the native populations, especially in education, training and future electoral rights. Her Government endorsed the steps that had been taken to deal with endemic environmental problems. The administering Powers should be encouraged to invite visiting missions, as had New Zealand in the case of Tokelau in 1994, and to participate in the work of the Special Committee.

8. The renewal of direct dialogue between Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Rio de Oro (Frente POLISARIO) was to be hailed. Direct contacts invariably offered the best possibility for durable solutions, and in the case of Western Sahara it was hoped that they would lead to the holding of the referendum in which the Saharan people could express their

(Mrs. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

will. On the question of East Timor, the promising series of meetings between the Secretary-General and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia and Portugal should be pursued, and greater access should be given to the United Nations and to humanitarian and human-rights organizations. Another cause for optimism was the constructive steps taken by the French authorities in New Caledonia, in cooperation with the inhabitants, to favour the development of all sectors and to provide the impetus for the Territory's self-determination.

9. Mr. MWAMBULUKUTU (United Republic of Tanzania) observed that while decolonization had been furthered by the fundamental changes in the international climate, 18 Territories still remained under colonial domination more than 30 years since the adoption of the historic Declaration on decolonization. The sluggish approach to their decolonization was a matter of concern, and his delegation endorsed the recommendations for accelerating the process that were made by the Special Committee in its report (A/48/23). The Special Committee had also made efforts to adjust to the changing times by seeking innovative and realistic solutions. Those administering Powers which had stopped participating in its work should heed the appeal for renewed contacts.

10. The problems of southern Africa, including the status of apartheid in South Africa, had been Tanzania's major preoccupation for years, and it saluted the international community for its steadfast contribution to the search for answers to that issue and to the conflicts in the region, in particular in Angola and Mozambique. The United Nations and the Fourth Committee could take some credit for the recent impressive advance towards the dismantling of apartheid. Nelson Mandela's call for the lifting of economic sanctions must be viewed as a sign of the profound and irreversible changes that had taken place in South Africa. The Committee must take cognizance of the views of the people of South Africa about the situation there and should then act according to their wishes. There were elements in South Africa still bent on impeding progress towards the establishment of a united, democratic and non-racial nation. Political violence was still the order of the day, and some groups refused to participate in the peace process, which instead all must be encouraged to support. A United Nations presence in that country was urgently needed to assist with the first non-racial election and later to help with the economic reconstruction of the country.

11. Five years since the adoption of the United Nations plan for a referendum in Western Sahara, the people there had yet to exercise their right to self-determination. Tanzania urged the Frente POLISARIO and Morocco to cooperate with the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to resolve the conflict peacefully.

12. The General Assembly's goal of complete decolonization by the year 2000 should be within grasp.

13. Mr. AZIKIWE (Nigeria) observed that the fact that most States which had become Members of the United Nations after 1945 and had themselves been former colonies attested to the success of the Committee in discharging its mandate. Since the remaining island Territories under colonial domination were small in

(Mr. Azikiwe, Nigeria)

size and population, and less endowed with natural resources, the United Nations had a more critical role in ensuring that they attained early independence, if that was the wish of the indigenous peoples themselves. The desire of the General Assembly to put the issue of colonialism behind it within a reasonable time-frame, by the year 2000, was an attainable goal. The merger of the Decolonization Committee with the Special Political Committee should not cause the Committee to relegate decolonization issues to the background. The Committee must see to it that the administering Powers promoted rather than hindered the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the indigenous peoples.

14. The question of Western Sahara required political will and flexibility on the part of both parties concerned if the long-standing conflict was to be resolved within the framework of the settlement plan promoted by the United Nations in cooperation with OAU. The question of human-rights violations in East Timor as well must be of concern to the Committee, which must consistently uphold the principle that all peoples without exception should be given the choice to decide their future political status.

15. Nigeria would work with other delegations on improving the language of the Committee's various resolutions so that they would reflect the positive trends now prevailing in international relations and the new realities in the Territories. It would continue to resist efforts to remove the question of apartheid in South Africa from the Committee's agenda as long as the black majority of South Africans remained disenfranchised.

16. Mr. MAINO (Papua New Guinea) observed that, although it was a remarkable achievement that since the adoption of the Declaration on decolonization over 80 Non-Self-Governing Territories had become independent, decolonization was still a priority for the remaining Territories scattered throughout the world. The United Nations approach to decolonization should be regularly reassessed to guarantee that due account was taken of their special needs and conditions.

17. The Committee must spearhead the Organization's final efforts to achieve the goal of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, by the year 2000 at the latest. Papua New Guinea had, as part of the activities of the Decade, recently hosted the latest in a series of regional seminars on decolonization, and the Committee should take due note of the conclusions and recommendations in the report of the Pacific Regional Seminar to Review the Political, Economic and Social Conditions in the Small Island Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/AC.109/1159). Such meetings would continue to provide opportunities for useful exchanges of information. Representatives of the Territories should be encouraged to participate in the seminars, as well as in the work of the Special Committee and the Fourth Committee.

18. Papua New Guinea endorsed the statement made by the delegation of the Marshall Islands on behalf of the members of the South Pacific Forum, expressing the commitment of those Governments to decolonization in their region.

19. In the case of New Caledonia, his delegation was gratified by the willingness of the French authorities to permit a South Pacific Forum

(Mr. Maino, Papua New Guinea)

ministerial visiting mission to assess developments in that Territory, and urged them to facilitate regular United Nations visiting missions. Encouraging measures were being taken by that administering Power under the 1988 Matignon Agreement for a peaceful solution to self-determination and independence; yet recent reports at the Pacific Regional Seminar by representatives of the Front de libération nationale kanak socialiste (FLNKS) (referred to in document A/AC.109/1159, paras. 14 and 15) indicated that a number of important issues of concern to the Kanak population were not being adequately addressed. Progress was also slow in a number of crucial areas like the training of Kanaks in relevant fields, including education as to their recognized rights under international law. Its own experience had made Papua New Guinea aware of the importance of human resource development in enabling indigenous populations to exercise their right to self-determination and independence under the best possible conditions.

20. Most of the remaining dependent Territories were situated in the Caribbean and the Pacific and were small islands with limited resources, small populations, single-crop economies and vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change, as well as to the effects of unplanned exploitation of natural resources, unscrupulous fishing methods and illicit activities such as drug trafficking and money laundering. The international community had an obligation to protect them, but the administering Powers had the prime responsibility in that regard. His delegation noted with regret the gradual decline in the level of cooperation by some administering Powers with the Special Committee, and called on those concerned to honour their responsibilities under Article 73 e of the United Nations Charter. New Zealand was to be commended for its facilitation of a United Nations visiting mission to Tokelau in the coming year.

21. Papua New Guinea was following the developments in South Africa with keen interest and welcomed the agreement for the establishment of a transitional executive council to ensure that the first non-racial elections would be held in April 1994, thus paving the way for the establishment of an interim Government in that country.

22. Even though the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara had been delayed, his delegation commended the tireless efforts of the United Nations and in particular the Secretary-General, and hoped that the parties concerned would cooperate to ensure the implementation of the settlement plan for that Territory.

23. Mr. RODRIGUE (Haiti) said that, as the first country of modern times to embody the major issue of the twentieth century, namely the colonial problem, Haiti had long been aware of its responsibilities in the international sphere. Ever since 1801, when Toussaint L'Ouverture had told his countrymen that freedom imposed heavier obligations than the slavery from which they had emerged, Haiti had played its role in the constant struggle for justice, freedom, democracy and solidarity.

24. From the time that his country had achieved independence, in 1804, it had, despite the long period of international ostracism it had suffered, been active in the United Nations and in the Committee. At a time when there remained only

(Mr. Rodrigue, Haiti)

some 15 Non-Self-Governing Territories, it was essential that they too should achieve self-determination or independence, not only because of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, but because the moral conscience of the civilized world demanded it.

25. Although the history of the independence of Haiti was exemplary, the refusal to recognize that independence for over half a century, coupled with international isolation, had prevented Haitians from building a free nation where they could live in peace and prosperity.

26. After many years of struggling for a better future, the Haitian people had chosen democracy as a way out of the evils of underdevelopment. A group of men with sectarian interests based on exploitation of the masses, oppression, smuggling and drug trafficking, had assumed the right to stand against the century-long dream of a free Haiti.

27. There was no doubt that his country would triumph over the current grotesque period of its history. It was important, however, that the Committee should make sure that the administering Powers met their obligations to promote political, economic and social development in Territories seeking self-determination or independence in accordance with the wishes of the local population and that economic activities were oriented towards self-sufficiency. Only through a close partnership between newly independent Territories and the administering Powers and through constant solidarity, as well as through substantial aid for development, dissemination of human rights information and literacy, would the door to a free world be opened.

28. Mr. MORENO FERNANDEZ (Cuba) said that, in a year when so much had happened, the United Nations undoubtedly needed to be modernized; but it was also essential that its structures should be in tune with modern life, given the changes which had radically altered the political face of the world.

29. His delegation had welcomed the amalgamation of the Fourth Committee with the Special Political Committee and in particular the fact that it had implied no downgrading in the remaining work of decolonization. Indeed, more delegations had participated in the debate on decolonization than previously and most - with some few exceptions - had fully supported United Nations activities.

30. He noted that since the previous meeting there had been considerable progress in South Africa, which he hoped would lead to a speedy end to the abominable apartheid regime and the emergence of a democratic and non-racial South Africa. The Committee should, however, remain vigilant, to ensure that the changes that had taken place were irreversible. He hoped that African members would put forward specific proposals on what action should be taken in the future. He could assure them that his delegation would abide by their recommendations.

31. He regretted that he could not express the same satisfaction with regard to other matters before the Committee. While most members of the Special Committee on decolonization had continued their efforts to achieve the aims of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, new and even more

(Mr. Moreno Fernandez, Cuba)

formidable obstacles had arisen, owing to an increasing lack of cooperation on the part of some of the major colonial Powers and owing to some countries which had transferred their support for the cause of liberation to an open complicity with the survival of colonialism as a system of domination.

32. While it was unnecessary to repeat the achievements of the United Nations in the field of decolonization, it was worth repeating that such achievements would be incomplete and imperfect as long as even one people remained under the colonial yoke. He regretted that over the course of the previous year there had been no new, more positive steps towards decolonization.

33. The United Nations had the mechanism to carry out the proposals adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 46/181 to serve as a plan of action for the Decade; but little could be done while some attempted to subordinate that mechanism to the interests of colonial Powers and not to serve the legitimate aspirations of colonial peoples. Although some Territories undoubtedly did not yet wish for independence, they should be given every opportunity to express themselves freely in any way they wished. The smallness or remoteness of a Territory should not be used as a pretext to prevent its right to self-determination. Nor should it be prevented from using its own natural or other resources.

34. The principle of international cooperation to eradicate colonialism ought to operate both ways. The Special Committee on decolonization could not enjoy effective cooperation with the colonial Powers when many of them refused to cooperate with the decolonization mechanisms of the United Nations, and at the same time exerted a squalid form of blackmail against the Special Committee. Cooperation did not mean that the Special Committee on decolonization should abandon its task. Some considered that the concern with colonialism was obsolete. He would argue just the opposite: colonialism was no different from the way it had always been and the colonial Powers were living in the past. Indeed, as much as in the past, colonial peoples were subjected to growing deculturization, with the introduction of alien values, leading to societies more similar to the colonial Powers than to their own historic roots.

35. Moreover, there had been no move to create a national economic base to prepare the colonial Territories for political and economic independence. His country has no objection to foreign investment as such if it did not interfere with the progress to independence. Nothing should hinder a population's ability to exercise its right to self-determination, guaranteed by the Charter and the Declaration. Nor should that right be vitiated by the siting of military bases in those Territories by the colonial Powers.

36. It was sometimes claimed that the resolutions passed year after year by the Special Committee on decolonization and the Fourth Committee were repetitive. That was true, but only because the situations which they condemned and whose elimination they were seeking, far from being resolved, were becoming worse. The best way to stop that repetitiveness was to abandon colonial practices, proceed towards the real eradication of colonialism and establish effective cooperation with the Special Committee.

(Mr. Moreno Fernandez, Cuba)

37. He welcomed the fact that the Special Committee had not only improved its structures and workings, but had carried out its tasks. It had considered the subjects before it; it had made recommendations regarding small Territories; it had heard a significant number of petitioners from Puerto Rico, whose right to self-determination and independence had often been declared by the Committee; it had reaffirmed its solidarity with the settlement plan for Western Sahara in accordance with Security Council resolutions 658 (1990) and 690 (1991); and it had supported the proposal for a referendum on self-determination in that country. In short, it had made its modest contribution to the eradication of colonialism.

38. Mr. ALZAYANI (Bahrain) said that the eradication of colonialism was one area in which the United Nations had been particularly successful, inasmuch as most of the former colonial countries had gained independence and become Members of the United Nations, thanks to the combined efforts of the Organization and the peoples of those countries. His country looked forward to the realization of the final goal of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, namely the full implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

39. Mr. SNOUSSI (Morocco) said that he wished to supply a few further details on Western Sahara, concerning which the Secretary-General was continuing his efforts to implement the settlement plan. He recalled that Morocco had always cooperated fully with the Secretary-General in the search for a just and lasting solution to the problem; it was his country that had requested in principle that a referendum should be held and that its organization and supervision should be carried out by the United Nations. Similarly, it was Morocco's desire for peace which had led to the eventual establishment of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and its partial deployment after the cease-fire declaration.

40. He noted from the Secretary-General's report on the situation concerning Western Sahara, (S/25170, para. 28) that "the settlement plan for Western Sahara contained in ... document S/21360 and amplified and complemented with a detailed timetable in ... S/22464 and Corr.1 is based on proposals to which the parties had freely agreed in August 1988. Moreover, both parties were extensively consulted on all major aspects of the aforementioned reports ... . The resultant plan was designed to serve as a definite and agreed framework for the entire settlement process, starting with a cease-fire and culminating in a referendum, without the need for negotiating any further agreements for elaborating the details of the plan."

41. Given the extremely clear and pertinent observations by the Secretary-General, his delegation was amazed to hear members speaking of the possibility of a foregone conclusion owing to one provision or another of the settlement plan. They had also dwelt too much on the idea of the United Nations credibility on the matter.

42. In the same paragraph the Secretary-General had explained that there remained major differences between the parties. Mr. Boutros-Ghali had written: "my predecessor and senior members of his staff worked closely with representatives of both parties in the final months of 1991 in efforts to arrive

(Mr. Snoussi, Morocco)

at a workable compromise". He added that the Secretary-General had also stated, in paragraph 16, that "the criteria for eligibility to vote ... constituted a just and fair basis for the monitoring of the referendum". Morocco had accepted the criteria, whereas the Frente POLISARIO had rejected them on the ground that they were incompatible with the relevant provisions of the plan. It was clear from the passages he had just quoted that Morocco had never hindered the Secretary-General's efforts.

43. The Security Council had subsequently adopted resolution 809 (1993) which, in calling on the Secretary-General and his special representative to intensify their efforts to resolve the issues, in particular those relating to the interpretation and application of criteria for eligibility, confirmed unambiguously that the establishment of such criteria was the exclusive prerogative of the Secretary-General and did not need the agreement of the parties.

44. The Secretary-General had accordingly gone to the region to urge both parties to accept a compromise solution. In his report (S/26185) he had noted that both parties had expressed reservations regarding his proposals. However, he had expressly stated in paragraph 6 that "reservations expressed by the authorities at Rabat centred on specific provisions concerning tribal links with the Territory which, in their view, were unduly restrictive. In spite of these concerns, Morocco has since acquiesced in the compromise in its present form". Meanwhile, the Frente POLISARIO had expressed its "acceptance of all the criteria for voter eligibility enunciated by my predecessor in the annex to his report of 19 December 1991" (S/23299, para. 7) - namely, 22 months after the event - and, moreover, "in expressing substantial reservations on the compromise, the POLISARIO authorities proposed several amendments to the text." The Secretary-General had stressed the urgency with which the compromise should be accepted.

45. Despite the Secretary-General's further efforts to explain and clarify his remarks, the Frente POLISARIO had not yet responded to his urgent request. The delay in implementing the settlement plan could not be laid at the door of Morocco. His country had made every effort to create a climate of confidence to speed up the implementation. It had therefore responded favourably to the encouragement from the Secretary-General and others to set up exploratory talks, which had taken place at Laayoune in mid-July 1993 and had been attended by Saharans from the Territory and from the refugee camps. There had been a fraternal and positive exchange of views. He hoped that the Laayoune initiative could be pursued in the same spirit in New York.

46. Despite the difficulties, some progress had been made in implementing the settlement plan in accordance with Security Council resolution 809 (1993). Some practical arrangements towards starting the process of registration and identification of Saharans were in hand. The process had reached an important stage and he therefore appealed to friendly countries to advise those in the refugee camps to put his country's good will and realism to the test. They had a common duty to reunite as quickly as possible Saharan families who wished to get to work on the economic, cultural and social development of Western Sahara. Everything that might delay or jeopardize the implementation of the plan should therefore be avoided.

47. Mr. APPLEWHITE (United Nations Development Programme) said that UNDP currently provided support to eight Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean. Bermuda and the British Virgin Islands, because of their high per capita income, had net contributor status. UNDP country programmes for all the Territories also received significant national Government contributions. UNDP support to the Non-Self-Governing Territories focused on human resource development, economic and social development planning, environmental programmes and tourism.

48. UNDP also provided support to Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories through the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean. As small island developing countries, all the Territories were receiving UNDP support in preparation for the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States to be held in Barbados in 1994. Support was also being provided by the United Nations Population Fund for the Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories in order to participate in the International Conference on Population and Development to be held in Cairo in 1994.

AGENDA ITEM 83: EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION (A/48/46; A/C.4/48/L.2)

49. Mr. MINTZ (Canada), introducing the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) (A/48/46), said that the concerns of countries regarding the effects of ionizing radiation on human health and the environment had not diminished since UNSCEAR had been established in 1955. Indeed, the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station had shown that the consequences of serious accidents could be widespread and the need for guidance and information on radiation and its effects was essential. For that reason, Canada was pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution A/C.4/48/L.2.

50. He described the mandate of the Scientific Committee and emphasized the importance of the technical documents on ionizing radiation submitted to it by Member States and specialized agencies. He noted that UNSCEAR had achieved significant economies in its use of resources. For example, in preparing documentation, UNSCEAR relied for assistance on consultant scientists. However, despite its small size, UNSCEAR remained remarkably free of political, social or scientific bias.

51. UNSCEAR's technical reports, issued periodically as United Nations sales publications, were used for reference by scientists the world over and served as the basis for international and national standards for radiation protection.

52. Mr. KONIK (Poland) said that his delegation had been greatly impressed by the Scientific Committee's comprehensive report (A/48/46). It was commendable that all UNSCEAR member States had submitted detailed information regarding radionuclide emissions from the full nuclear fuel cycle in civilian nuclear reactors, making it possible to prepare a precise evaluation of radiation risks associated with nuclear energy. His delegation was confident that the Scientific Committee would continue to maintain the high quality of its reports. Poland, which had participated in the Scientific Committee's work, was pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution A/C.4/48/L.2.

53. Mr. MISHRA (India) said that India welcomed the annual reports of UNSCEAR as a useful tool for creating greater awareness concerning the effects of different types of radiation. He was confident that the Scientific Committee would continue to receive information pertinent to its research. In that regard, the contributions of the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the International Commission on Radiological Protection and the International Commission on Radiation Units and Measurements had been particularly valuable.

54. As a country with its own atomic energy programme for peaceful purposes, India had long been aware of the need to maintain the highest nuclear safety standards. It was an active participant in the work of the Scientific Committee.

55. India believed that the power of the atom should be used only to advance human progress. For that reason, he welcomed the recent renewed support for a comprehensive test ban and for a ban on production of fissile material for weapons purposes through multilateral, universal and verifiable treaties that would pave the way for general and complete disarmament under international control.

56. In conclusion, he said that India was pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolution contained in document A/C.4/48/L.2.

57. Mr. SEARLE (Chile) said that his country felt that the treatment of item 83 must include the aspects of health, environment and safety and that priority must therefore be given to the unconditional and immediate cessation of nuclear testing. The Chilean Government considered that the current moratorium should be consolidated in a binding international agreement.

58. Chile noted with satisfaction the continued suspension of nuclear testing in the South Pacific and hoped for a formal agreement to terminate such tests. It had felt concern at China's recent decision to conduct a nuclear test five times as powerful that which had destroyed Hiroshima. It hoped that China would not resume the development of nuclear weapons of mass destruction.

59. Not only were the effects of nuclear testing lethal to human beings, but they also affected the marine environment, persisting at the lower end of the marine food chain. A study undertaken jointly by IAEA, WHO and the European Community, had concluded that the atmospheric transport of nuclear radiation could not be adequately predicted.

60. His delegation valued the work being done by UNSCEAR and various other bodies on updating international standards of radiological protection and international programmes such as that concerned with Chernobyl. It also felt that special attention should be devoted to ocean dumping of radioactive substances. Chile, together with other States members of the South Pacific, had signed a protocol prohibiting such dumping in the territorial waters of member States. It felt that IAEA and UNSCEAR should take steps to develop the rules governing international liability for nuclear accidents.

(Mr. Searle, Chile)

61. His delegation hoped that the Conference on Disarmament would incorporate the subject of radioactive waste into the draft Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons and that the implementation of the IAEA Code of Practice on the International Transboundary Movement of Radioactive Waste would enhance protection for all States. It eagerly awaited the IAEA's study of the desirability of concluding a legally binding instrument in that field, as requested in General Assembly resolution 47/52 D.

62. Chile also attributed enormous importance to the aspects of Agenda 21 concerning the reduction of environmental hazards and pollution affecting human health, and consequently also to the goal of ensuring the integrated management, transport, storage and disposal of waste.

63. Ms. McKAY (Australia) said that Australia was pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution A/C.4/48/L.2. Australia valued highly the work of UNSCEAR, of which it had been a member since its inception.

64. Much new information on the effects on humans of ionizing radiation was emerging from studies done in the former USSR, and would be reviewed by UNSCEAR in the coming years.

65. In the context of the current draft resolution, Australia emphasized that the work of UNSCEAR should not be seen in scientific isolation; it had practical relevance in a world overarmed with nuclear weapons. It was particularly disappointing that China had recently conducted a nuclear test when the United States, Russia and France all had moratoriums in place and the international community was moving towards the negotiation of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Australia urged those countries to continue their moratoriums indefinitely despite China's action.

66. Australia urged the three nuclear-weapon States which had not yet done so - the United States, the United Kingdom and France - to sign and ratify the third protocol of the Treaty of Rarotonga, which had established the South Pacific as a nuclear-free zone. Australia remained committed to the ultimate objective of complete nuclear disarmament under effective international control and was working assiduously towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

67. Mr. SCHERBAK (Russian Federation) said that the report of the Scientific Committee (A/48/46) represented an important contribution to the effort to prevent and mitigate the consequences of pollution caused by radiation. Of particular interest to his country was the Committee's work on consequences of the Chernobyl accident.

68. The data compiled by the Scientific Committee continued to be useful for raising awareness of the dangers of radioactive pollution of the environment and also of the need to prevent such pollution, particularly, by ending nuclear testing. The establishment of a verifiable, universal and comprehensive test ban continued to be an important goal of Russia's foreign policy. In that context, Russia attached great importance to the thirtieth anniversary of the signing in Moscow of the limited nuclear-test-ban treaty, which had paved the way for future progress in that field.

(Mr. Scherbak, Russian Federation)

69. The fundamental changes taking place in the world were drawing attention to the need to prevent the proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction. Russia believed that a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty would contribute significantly to that effort. He noted with satisfaction that the five nuclear Powers and the other participants in the Conference on Disarmament had decided to take up that question. His Government intended to play an active role in the painstaking task of completing such a treaty.

70. Lastly, he expressed the hope that the relevant United Nations agencies and bodies, including the Scientific Committee, would become more deeply involved with the problems of environmental protection and would exploit achievements in science and technology for the benefit of all mankind. The Scientific Committee could make an important contribution in that regard.

71. Mr. Kalpage (Sri Lanka) took the Chair.

72. Mr. DEWEZ (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that the role of UNSCEAR in the study of ionizing radiation had taken on new significance in the light of evolving technologies in medicine and electric-power generation. Nevertheless, radiation from natural sources remained the single most important form of ionizing radiation to which humans were exposed. The European Community and its member States were more convinced than ever of the need for the closest international cooperation in the study of ionizing radiation from all sources, and welcomed the important role that UNSCEAR continued to play in that regard.

73. The European Community and its member States also attached great importance to nuclear safety. In that connection, he welcomed the recent joint initiatives taken by IAEA and UNDP to reinforce infrastructure for protection from radiation and for nuclear safety in the States of the former USSR, and the project to assess radiation levels in the Arctic ocean. He said that UNSCEAR had done commendable work on the effects of ionizing radiation. He expressed the desire of the European Community and its member States to cooperate further with UNSCEAR, and hoped that its mandate would be renewed.

74. Mr. ALVAREZ (Uruguay) stated that the merger of the Special Political Committee and the Fourth Committee represented the most recent effort to revitalize the General Assembly, which meant defining precisely the Assembly's original mandate, reaffirming its sphere of competence and imparting to it a greater role in the conduct of the activities of the United Nations within the modern international system. At a time when the other Committees had undertaken an in-depth study and rationalization of their agendas, the Fourth Committee should do the same. The formula adopted by the General Assembly of simply combining the full agendas of the two Committees could be only a temporary solution. Possible approaches might be to deal with items on a biennial or triennial basis, group items in clusters and make full use of the Main Committees, leaving the plenary assembly to operate not as another committee but as a forum for Member States to set forth their foreign policy at the highest level. Such alternatives, his delegation felt, must be analysed carefully, but the General Assembly should not be prevented by excessive caution from exercising its role as a protagonist in the performance of its extremely important functions.

(Mr. Alvarez, Uruguay)

75. The UNSCEAR report (A/48/46) would be examined in greater depth by Uruguayan scientific authorities, who would communicate their comments to the competent quarters at the appropriate time. Uruguay considered the report to be highly useful, and its conclusions regarding the volumes of radiation received from various sources were somewhat reassuring. Nevertheless, one could not forget the tragic accidents at civilian nuclear power plants or the spectre of an enormous, still threatening nuclear arsenal. The report presented solid scientific data, but what concerned the international community was the possible misuse of artificial sources of ionizing radiation by human beings. His delegation, which belonged to one of the planet's denuclearized zones, reaffirmed its interest in keeping the item and the important activities of UNSCEAR constantly within the purview of the international community.

76. Mr. ZHOLDOKOV (Ukraine) said that knowledge of natural sources of radiation was useful in preventing accidental exposure to such sources, which was generally limited in character. Prevention of exposure to man-made sources, however, often depended on both political will and the safe use of nuclear energy.

77. The significance of the earlier adoption of a partial test ban by the nuclear-weapon States was becoming much clearer as facts from the past emerged - for example, the fact that hundreds of thousands of civilians in the former Soviet Union had been unwittingly exposed to radiation due to nuclear-weapon testing. Ukraine therefore firmly supported efforts towards the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. It felt regret at actions taken which might shake the growing consensus on the need to halt nuclear tests once and for all.

78. With regard to the safe use of nuclear energy, he could not avoid mentioning the Chernobyl catastrophe, whose after-effects had been found by Ukrainian scientists to be considerably in excess of the initial estimates. He warned against the tranquillizing effect of the conclusion of UNSCEAR in paragraph 154 of its report that the health of the population in the zones around the evacuation area in 1990 had been comparable to that of the population in nearly uncontaminated settlements.

79. Information provided by the Health Ministry of Ukraine showed significant increases in diseases attributable to radiation exposure as a result of the accident, and despite the country's difficult economic situation, 12 per cent of its national income was directed each year to assistance programmes for the victims of Chernobyl. The United Nations inter-agency task force on Chernobyl, established in 1992, would greatly enhance international coordination in that area. Cooperation between UNSCEAR and the task force would increase the practical applicability of UNSCEAR's findings.

80. His delegation, as a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.4/48/L.2, felt that its adoption would facilitate the work of UNSCEAR in providing to the scientific and world community its latest evaluations of the sources and effects of ionizing radiation.

81. Mr. ZVANKO (Belarus) welcomed the Scientific Committee's report, which would be of great interest to specialists and to the international community as a whole.

82. The subject of the effects of radiation on humans was particularly important for Belarus, which continued to suffer from the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe. In that regard, he drew attention to the variety of health problems with which Belarus was afflicted, including high incidences of thyroid cancer and birth defects. In addition, the health of the population as a whole was suffering as a result of disruptions in diet and long-term stress. While the Government continued to take all possible steps to alleviate the consequences of the disaster, its resources were stretched to the limit. For that reason, Belarus believed that cooperative projects under the guidance of the United Nations and specialized agencies and bodies such as UNSCEAR would be particularly useful in remedying the situation. One example was the project organized by IAEA, FAO and Norway, which had shown that it was possible to reduce levels of radioactive cesium in dairy products and meat.

83. Despite progress made in mitigating the effects of the Chernobyl disaster, there was still a great need for information regarding the internal and external effects of small doses of radiation on the human body and the environment. The establishment in Minsk of an international centre for the study of radiation effects could provide a unique opportunity for scientists throughout the world to work together with their Belarusian colleagues in the study of the effects of radiation.

84. In conclusion, he said that Belarus had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.4/48/L.2.

85. Mr. ZHANG ZHONG (China) said that his delegation considered the UNSCEAR report (A/48/46) a high-level, comprehensive scientific document on atomic doses and effects that fully reflected the policies and points of view of the UNSCEAR member States. UNSCEAR reports furnished the United Nations system and its member States with an objective scientific basis for formulating policies, coordinating activities and achieving consensus, in addition to providing guidance for scientific research.

86. He felt it necessary, in view of the mention made by some delegates of the recent underground nuclear tests carried out in China, to point out that China had always exercised the utmost restraint in nuclear testing and that the number of nuclear tests it had conducted was the lowest of any nuclear-weapon State. China had all along stood for the complete prohibition and destruction of nuclear weapons and a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. China had solemnly declared, on the very day in 1964 when it had come into possession of nuclear weapons, that it would never be the first to use such weapons. It had further declared that it would neither use nor threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or in nuclear-free zones. China believed that the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty was a positive step and would participate actively in the negotiations, working with other countries for the conclusion of such a treaty by 1996 at the latest. The Chinese Government had explicitly stated that once a comprehensive test-ban treaty was concluded and came into effect, China would abide by it and carry out no further tests.

87. The CHAIRMAN announced that Azerbaijan, Costa Rica, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.4/48/L.2.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.